

United States Senate
Office of the Democratic Leader
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Contact: Ranit Schmelzer
 (202) 224-2939

Statement by Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle
Announcing His Decision Not to Seek the Presidency in 2004

As I've said over the last several days, I've been giving serious consideration to running for President in 2004. I indicated that I would reach a final decision sometime very soon, and I've now reached that decision.

I've long believed that in order to be successful as a Presidential candidate, one must be 100 percent focused on that single goal. I have given this a lot of thought, and talked extensively with family, friends, colleagues and supporters -- and they were tremendously supportive. They urged me strongly to run. And to be honest, I came very close to deciding in favor of running.

Yet, after careful reflection, I've concluded that at this moment in our history, with so many important decisions to be made about our nation's future, my passion lies here in the Senate serving the people of South Dakota, and fighting for working families all across America.

The country is about to begin a series of defining debates about the future -- on economic policy, homeland security, and many other critical priorities. Those debates will take place here in the U.S. Congress. And the U.S. Senate is the institution that can have the most influence on behalf of the values that Democrats believe in, and that I care about most.

The United States Senate has the opportunity to shape the nation's priorities -- not just over the next two years, but for a generation and more. This afternoon, President Bush is proposing an economic plan that not only continues a failed economic policy that is wrong for the country now, but weakens our ability to meet America's great national challenges for years to come.

When I truly confronted the question of what it is I most want to do and where my passion lies today, I concluded that I want to be here in the Senate, making a difference for my state and my country.

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